



Bringing Life to History

Study & Resource Guide

Through the Eyes of a Friend

ABOUT THE PROGRAM

[Living Voices](#) combines live performance with archival film to authentically represent diverse perspectives from the past that resonate today.

In 12 different dynamic, original programs, the unique Living Voices signature technique synchronizes historical film footage and photographs with a single live performer. Based on real people and events, each production gives the audience a chance to experience how the world looked, sounded, and felt during a significant time in history, highlighting lesser-known points of view. Pre- and post-show visual aids and discussion extend the learning. All programs are available both in-person and online.

Our mission is to bring life to history: educating and inspiring youth and communities to promote justice, stand up against intolerance, empathize with people different from themselves, understand history through a personal, inclusive lens, and see themselves as part of it.

SHOW DESCRIPTION

[*Through the Eyes of a Friend*](#) parallels the life of Anne Frank through the historically accurate composite character of Sarah Weiss, another Jewish young person growing up in Germany at the onset of World War II. The character of Sarah is based on the real testimonies of many who knew Anne Frank, as well as other victims, resisters and survivors of the Holocaust and World War II.

Like Anne Frank, Sarah is a young Jewish girl in Amsterdam when Hitler comes to power in the 1930s, whose experiences under Nazi rule, in hiding and through the concentration camps also reflects Anne's story. *Through the Eyes of a Friend* remains faithful to Anne Frank's life and her world.

Significant historical events include:

- Hitler and the Nazi Party's rise to power in Germany
- Jewish emigration from Germany to Amsterdam
- Start of World War II
- Nazi invasion and rule of the Netherlands
- Jewish experience in hiding
- Nazi prison and concentration camps: Westerbork, Auschwitz, Bergen-Belsen
- Jewish post-war experience

GRADE LEVEL: 5th and up

Common Core English Language Arts Standards

Speaking & Listening: Comprehension and Collaboration

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.SL.1](#): Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.SL.2](#): Integrate and evaluate information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.SL.3](#): Evaluate a speaker's point of view, reasoning, and use of evidence and rhetoric.

Reading: Key Ideas and Details

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.3](#): Analyze how and why individuals, events, or ideas develop and interact over the course of a text.

Reading: Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.7](#): Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse media and formats, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.

Writing: Research to Build and Present Knowledge

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.W.9](#): Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

Washington State Social Studies Standards

Social Studies 1: Uses critical reasoning skills to analyze and evaluate claims.

Social Studies 3: Deliberates public issues.

Civics 2: Understands the purposes, organization, and function of governments, laws, and political systems.

Civics 4: Understands civic involvement.

History 2: Understands and analyzes causal factors that have shaped major events in history

History 3: Understands that there are multiple perspectives and interpretations of historical events.

History 4: Understands how historical events inform analysis of contemporary issues and events.

National Core Arts Standards

Responding: Understanding and evaluating how the arts convey meaning.

7. Perceive and analyze artistic work.

Connecting: Relating artistic ideas and work with personal meaning and external context.

11. Relate artistic ideas and works with societal, cultural, and historical context to deepen understanding.

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

- What was the Holocaust?
- How and why did the Holocaust happen?
- What was the experience of an individual young Jewish person during the Holocaust?
- How does the Holocaust relate to current events and issues?

HISTORICAL CONTEXT: WHAT WAS THE HOLOCAUST?

Sources: [United States Holocaust Memorial Museum](#), [Anne Frank Center USA](#)

The following serves as only the briefest introduction to the Holocaust. For more information, please consult [Introduction to the Holocaust: What was the Holocaust? | Holocaust Encyclopedia \(ushmm.org\)](#).

The Holocaust was the mass murder of European Jews by the Nazi party from 1939-45. Within the context of World War II, Hitler and his followers waged a separate war against the Jews, with the goal of total extermination. From the beginning of the Nazi party, their propaganda was specifically antisemitic, building on popular anti-Jewish superstitions and beliefs to gain public support for their plan. Six million Jews were killed during the Holocaust, approximately one-third of all Jews in the world at that time. In addition, the Nazis targeted for persecution and murdered another 6 million people from other ethnic and social groups.

After World War I, Germans were shocked by losing the war and angered by the terms of the Versailles Peace Treaty. Worldwide depression, unemployment, and inflation added to their general dissatisfaction. These conditions created a situation that was ripe for the rise of fascism.

The Nazis (Nationalist Socialist German Workers' Party), founded in 1920, planned to abolish the Versailles Treaty, promising to restore greatness to Germany. Adolf Hitler was their leader, the Fuhrer. The Nazi party's platform included constant attacks on the Jews, the importance of the Fuhrer's absolute authority, the use of propaganda and terror, the purity and superiority of the Aryan race, and the hatred of both communism and democracy. Hitler came into power as Chancellor of Germany in 1933. By 1937, the Nazi regime was fully in control.

Antisemitism was essential to Hitler and the Nazis' goal of world domination. Nazi propaganda made the Jews scapegoats, depicting them as evil and threatening to the Aryans. Other groups persecuted by the Nazis included political opponents, social democrats, communists, homosexuals, Roma/Sinti people, Jehovah's Witnesses, Catholics, Poles, and the mentally or physically disabled. By segregating and denying these people their rights, the Nazis made them non-human. The 1935 Nuremberg Laws legally defined Jews as non-citizens. Elimination was the next step.

As part of Hitler's plan for world domination, the Nazis annexed Austria and Czechoslovakia, then occupied Bohemia and Moravia. On September 1, 1939, the German Army invaded Poland;

two days later, France and Britain declared war, the beginning of World War II. France, Britain and 26 other countries, including the Soviet Union and the United States, became known as the Allied Powers. The Axis powers were Germany, Italy and Japan. In 1940, Germany invaded Denmark and Norway, then Holland and Belgium, and finally France, breaking through the Allied front and taking control of the majority of Western Europe. Germany next moved into Eastern Europe, capturing millions of Jews who had escaped from earlier invasions.

The Nazis targeted the Jews for total genocide and destruction. By the end of the war, they had murdered two out of every three Jews in Europe. In each country, the Nazis set up ghettos, transit and forced labor camps, as well as concentration and death camps, rounding up and deporting Jews, political opponents, resistance fighters, Roma/Sinti people, homosexuals, Jehovah's Witnesses, and any other "enemies" of the Nazi party.

By 1941, Hitler fully dominated Europe. Under his regime, Germany would be the homeland of his superior race, the Aryans. Inferior races would be laborers for the Aryans; the Jews would be eliminated through the Nazi Final Solution. The Nazis expanded the camp system and found faster, more efficient methods of mass murder. Jews were transported to concentration camps in sealed cattle cars from all over Europe. At death camps, everyone was immediately killed upon arrival. At labor camps, selected prisoners who looked healthy enough to work served as slave labor, living under inhumane conditions: crowding, disease, lack of food and hygiene, and constant terror. When they were no longer useful, these individuals were also killed.

Although resistance to Nazism was punishable by death, there were small groups of people in Europe who refused to join the party and risked their lives to help in many different ways. There were incidents of uprisings in Jewish ghettos and armed revolts in death camps, as well as smaller acts of solidarity and resistance. Throughout the Holocaust, the Jews faced the challenge of maintaining their will to live, as well as their human dignity.

Even when the Axis Powers began losing the war, the Nazis continued deportations of the Jews. As the Allies moved into German-occupied territory, the Nazis began to cover up the evidence of their work, destroying camps and sending prisoners on death marches toward Germany to prevent their liberation. In April 1945, when it was clear Germany had lost the war, Hitler committed suicide. In May, Germany surrendered and the war in Europe ended. The Japanese surrendered in August, and World War II was over.

Even after they were free, prisoners continued to die of disease, starvation, and exhaustion. Displaced persons camps were set up for the several hundred thousand people who had survived or escaped the Nazis. Jews who tried returning to their homes were often met with hostility and antisemitic attacks. Few people wanted to hear about the genocide, let alone acknowledge their own role in it. Many Jews were eager to leave Europe and looked for opportunities to emigrate. These survivors re-built their lives despite the terrible physical, psychological, and economic damage they suffered under the hatred and discrimination created by the Nazi regime.

In later years, Nazi leaders and followers were brought to court and convicted. During the Nuremberg War Crimes Trials in 1945, some high-ranking Nazis were prosecuted for crimes against humanity: the genocide of 12 million people, including 6 million Jews.

TIMELINE: ANNE FRANK & WORLD WAR IISource: [Anne Frank Center USA](https://www.annefrank.org/)

For more specific historical context related to Anne Frank and her diary, please consult [Anne Frank Center USA Reader's Companion to the Diary](https://www.annefrank.org/reader-companion-to-the-diary/).

June 1929	Anne Frank born in Germany.
January 1933	Hitler appointed Chancellor of Germany.
March 1933	Nazi government establishes Dachau, the first concentration camp.
April 1933	Nazis implement a boycott of Jewish doctors, lawyers, and businesses, and remove Jews from jobs in government and schools.
May 1933	In book burning rallies across Germany, Nazis and their followers destroy books written by Jews and other enemies of the Nazis.
July 1933	Hitler bans all political parties except the Nazi Party.
February 1934	Anne Frank and her family emigrate to Amsterdam, the Netherlands.
September 1935	German government passes the Nuremberg Laws.
March 1938	Germany occupies Austria.
November 1938	Kristallnacht (the night of broken glass): Nazis and their followers in Germany and Austria attack Jewish-owned stores, buildings, schools, hospitals, homes, and synagogues.
September 1939	Hitler invades Poland; France and Britain declare war on Germany, beginning World War II.
April/May 1940	Germany invades and occupies Denmark, Norway, Holland, France, Belgium, and Luxembourg.
February 1941	Nazis make mass arrests of Dutch Jews.
Summer 1941	Anne and her sister Margot attend the Jewish School in Amsterdam.
March 1942	Nazis establish death camps at Sobibor, Belzec, and Auschwitz-Birkenau; more follow.
June 1942	Anne receives a diary for her thirteenth birthday.

July 1942	The Frank family goes into hiding in the Secret Annex with the van Pels (Van Daan) family.
November 1942	Fritz Pfeffer (Mr. Dussel) goes into hiding in the Secret Annex.
June 1944	D Day: Allies move into Western Europe.
August 1944	The members of the Secret Annex are betrayed, discovered, and deported to Westerbork, a transit camp.
September 1944	The members of the Secret Annex are sent to Auschwitz, a concentration camp in Poland.
October 1944	Anne and Margot Frank are sent to Bergen-Belsen, a concentration camp in Germany.
January 1945	Anne's mother dies at Auschwitz. Russian army liberates Auschwitz and Anne's father is freed.
Feb/March 1945	Anne and Margot Frank die at Bergen-Belsen.
April 1945	Hitler commits suicide.
May 1945	Germany surrenders, ending the war in Europe.
June 1945	Otto Frank returns to Amsterdam.
Summer 1947	Anne's diary is first published.

GLOSSARY

Source: [Anne Frank Center USA](#)

For additional terms and definitions, please consult the glossaries available from the [United States Holocaust Memorial Museum](#), [Anti-Defamation League](#), and [Jewish Virtual Library](#).

Allies: twenty-six countries, including the United States, Britain, and the Soviet Union, united to oppose the **Axis** powers, including Germany, Italy, and Japan, during World War II.

Antisemitism: prejudice against and/or fear of Jews.

Aryan: anyone with a pure German background, considered superior by Hitler and the Nazi party. The Nazi goal was to exterminate all races they considered inferior or threatening to Aryan racial purity, including the Jews.

Auschwitz-Birkenau: largest of the Nazi death camps, near Krakow, Poland, where more than one million Jews and others died.

Bergen-Belsen: Nazi concentration camp in Germany, where 30,000 people died of diseases such as starvation and typhus.

Concentration camp: places of imprisonment for the Jews and other enemies of the Nazi party; **labor camps**, where prisoners were put to work as slave labor and died from abuse, starvation, and disease; and **death camps**, established for murdering large numbers of people in gas chambers.

Crematorium: section of a death camp where prisoners were asphyxiated with poison gas, and their bodies burned.

Deportation: Nazis' forced removal of Jews from their homes to labor and death camps.

Final Solution: Nazi euphemism for their plan to exterminate the entire Jewish race.

Genocide: intentional and systematic murder of a specific racial group or group of people.

Gestapo: Nazi secret police, who organized the arrests and deportation of Jews.

Ghetto: Nazi-created Jewish Quarter of a city, where all Jews from surrounding areas were rounded up and forced to live, often as a step before deportation to concentration camps.

Holocaust: Nazi-driven genocide of six million Jews, and the murder of six million other people, during World War II.

Judenrein: German, meaning "Jew-free."

Kristallnacht: German, meaning "crystal night," the night of broken glass: the Nazi **pogrom** (riot) that destroyed thousands of Jewish shops and synagogues in Germany and German-occupied territory during November 9 and 10, 1938.

Liquidation: removal of all Jews through mass murder or deportation.

National Socialist German Worker's Party: official name of the Nazi party, led by Adolf Hitler from 1921-1945.

Nuremberg Laws: set of laws passed in Germany during the fall of 1935, which made Jews non-citizens and removed all their political and civil rights.

Nuremberg War Crimes Trials: international tribunal in November 1945 to try military and civilian Axis leaders for violations of the laws of war.

Prejudice: discrimination against a specific individual or group through stereotypical and unsubstantiated ideas.

Refugee: someone who leaves their native land because of expulsion, invasion, oppression, or persecution.

Resettlement: Nazi euphemism for the deportation and transport of Jews to concentration camps.

Roma: a historically nomadic people, considered an inferior race and targeted for extermination by the Nazis.

Scapegoat: person or group targeted by others to take the blame and responsibility for certain actions or events.

Selection: Nazi euphemism for the process of choosing which prisoners in a concentration camp would live to work or immediately be put to death.

Sinti: a historically nomadic people, considered an inferior race and targeted for extermination by the Nazis.

SS (Schutzstaffel): elite guard of the Gestapo, who ran the concentration camps.

Swastika: a hooked cross, used as the official symbol of the Nazi Party and still used today by neo-Nazi groups.

Third Reich: Nazi term for Germany and its occupied territories in Europe from 1933-1945.

Underground: term for going into hiding, or for a group acting in secret resistance.

Versailles Peace Treaty: treaty signed at the end of World War I which made Germany and its allies responsible for the war, imposing reparations payments, restoring German-occupied territories to other countries, and limiting the German military.

Westerbork: transit camp for Dutch Jews in Holland, from which 100,000 Jews were deported to concentration camps.

Yellow star: Jewish symbol of the six-pointed Star of David, which the Nazis forced Jews above the age of six to wear in public.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Many websites contain and/or lead to additional links. Please consider this list as a starting point for your own research and exploration.

Museums & organizations

[Yad Vashem. The World Holocaust Remembrance Center](#)

[United States Holocaust Memorial Museum](#)

[Museum of Tolerance](#)

[Ghetto Fighters' House Museum](#)

[Auschwitz-Birkenau](#)

[Simon Wiesenthal Center](#)

[World Federation of Jewish Child Survivors of the Holocaust & Descendants](#)

[The International Raoul Wallenberg Foundation](#)

[Holocaust Educational Resource \(nizkor.org\)](#)

[National Museum of American Jewish History](#)

[The Netherlands in World War II – Verzetsmuseum](#)

Teacher Resources

[Teaching Materials on the Holocaust — United States Holocaust Memorial Museum](#)

[Holocaust Teacher Resource Center – Resources about the Holocaust](#)

[A Teacher's Guide to the Holocaust \(usf.edu\)](#)

[The Holocaust Explained: Designed for schools](#)

[Holocaust Studies: the Shoah, Holocaust Remembrance Day, Kristallnacht, concentration camps, Auschwitz \(aish.com\)](#)

[Home \(grenierdesarah.org\)](#) (ages 8-12)

History & Research

[USC Shoah Foundation |](#)

[The Holocaust History - A People's and Survivor History - Remember.org](#)

[Women and the Holocaust](#)

[The Holocaust, Crimes, Heroes and Villains \(auschwitz.dk\)](http://auschwitz.dk)

[Holocaust Archives | My Jewish Learning](#)

[The Holocaust Wing \(jewishvirtuallibrary.org\)](http://jewishvirtuallibrary.org)

centropa.org | [Connecting the world to the land of Jewish heritage.](#)

[Center for Jewish History](#)

[American Jewish Historical Society](#)

Anne Frank

[Anne Frank Center USA](#)

[Home | Anne Frank House](#)

[Miep Gies](#)

Film & Video

[Film and Video Archive — United States Holocaust Memorial Museum](#)

[Film and the Holocaust | The National Holocaust Centre and Museum](#)

WORKSHOPS

[Book a post-show workshop](#) to supplement your program:

- explore the issues, historical events, and their relevance through interactive drama techniques with a Living Voices performer
- address additional [Arts Standards](#)
- available for groups of 30 or less
- can be scheduled as part of a 3-show day or separately

EXTENSION & INTEGRATION ACTIVITIES

Adaptable for students of all levels, these activities can be used as tools for assessment or reflection, and provide deeper exploration of the essential questions, topics, and themes.

Students may respond through any artistic medium, such as:

Writing: write a story, poem, article, caption, monologue, scene, play, graphic novel, diary, speech

Media/Visual Arts: take a photograph; make a video; draw or paint a picture; create a collage, sculpture or comic strip

Drama/Movement: create a frozen image or series of images; plan or improvise a monologue, scene or play; choreograph a dance or movement

Music: write a song (vocal or instrumental); create a soundtrack

- Supplement a specific scene in the play with work in another medium; for example: illustrate it, act it out, etc.
- Re-create a scene from the play from another character's point of view.
- Imagine you could contact the main character from the play. What would you want to tell or show them about the present?
- What connections can you make between the historical events of the play and what's happening now—in your own life, your community, the country, the world?
- Research historical documents for a real person's first-person account of an event portrayed in the play. How is it similar or different to the perspective in the play?
- Research another event or movement in history or from current events. How is it similar or different to the event or movement in the play?

Drama Activities

Please click on the hyperlinked text for more information on a specific activity, where available.

[Role-on-the-wall](#): a character is represented as an outline of a person on a large piece of paper. On the inside of the figure, write or draw what the character thinks and feels about themselves; on the outside, write or draw how they appear or how others perceive them. This activity can be used or repeated for any character in the play, and/or other fictional or historical figures. Students may work independently or collaboratively. For more information: [Arts-Integration Role-on-the-Wall](#).

[Voices in the Head](#): Students form two lines facing each other to make a path for the Living Voices character, representing their journey in the play. As one participant representing the character passes through the created path, other students speak to the character as the character's family & friends, as the character's own inner thoughts and feelings, or as themselves. Students may offer advice, ask questions, or share other perspectives.

[Hot seating](#): Interview a character from the play, portrayed by teacher, student, or group.

[Statues/Tableau](#): Students work individually, in pairs or small groups to create a frozen picture of a specific place, situation, event, idea or topic related to the play. Each participant uses face and body to create a statue of a character within the picture, working together in pairs or groups to present a cohesive image. A tableau can be literal or symbolic. Extensions:

- [Hot seat](#) characters from the tableau
- [Add voice](#) and/or movement to the tableau
- Create a series of statues or tableaux to present a [story or sequence](#)

[Sculpting](#): Brainstorm a list of words in response to the themes and story of the play. Guide students into pairs. One partner starts as the sculptor and the other as clay. For each round of sculpting, prompt sculptors with a word from the brainstorm list. Sculptors show a pose to reflect the given word to their partner, and the clay partner mirrors the statue. Sculptors step away from

their frozen partners so the group can view the sculpture gallery. Invite sculptors to describe what they see and make inferences and connections between the sculptures and the word. Repeat the process, with partners switching back and forth between the roles of sculptor and clay. Prompt with a new word for each round.

Persuasion Improvisation: Choose a moment from the play in which 2 characters have opposing points of view or objectives. Guide students into pairs. One partner starts as Character 1 and the other as Character 2. Prompt all pairs simultaneously to improvise the conversation between the 2 characters, in which each tries to convince the other to see their point of view. Participants should share their own perspective, listen to their partner, and respond to what they hear as their character. Repeat multiple times by switching partners or changing characters.

Make your own Living Voices program: Every Living Voices character shares an important time in history through their own personal experience. They start by introducing themselves, so the audience will understand their point of view. We are living through history right now. What do you want to communicate about your own experience during this time? Create your own short video to introduce yourself. What's important to you in this moment? Who or what makes you who you are? If you want, you may use video or images. Get creative—make your voice a Living Voice, and please share your work with us at livingvoices@livingvoices.org!